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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: MALIKI ADVISOR SAYS PM UNLIKELY TO JOIN SHI'A
COALITION; FEARS IRAN WILL FOMENT VIOLENCE IN RUN-UP TO
ELECTION

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2288
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 2832

Classified By: DCM Robert Ford for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) In a meeting with the DCM on September 2, PM Maliki's Chief of Staff, Tariq Abdullah, said it was "doubtful" that the PM would join the recently-formed Iraqi National Alliance (INA). (Note: As reported ref A, Iraq's main Shi'a parties, with the notable exception of Maliki's Da'wa Party, launched the INA on August 24 to compete in the upcoming national election. End note.) Abdullah said he recently saw Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who "requested" that Maliki's Da'wa join the INA; however, Sistani had not "ordered" Maliki to do so. Absent such an order, Abdullah put the odds of Maliki coming to terms with the INA at "one in a hundred." Noting that he serves as a primary intermediary between Maliki and the Grand Ayatollah, Abdullah indicated that he typically travels to visit the reclusive al-Sistani when Maliki is unable to do so.

[1](#)2. (C) Responding to the DCM's question about Iranian pressure on Maliki to join the INA to maintain Shi'a unity, Abdullah stressed that among Iraq's Shi'a parties, Da'wa alone had resisted Iran's strong-arm tactics in the past. Abdullah believed Iran would seek in the remaining months before the election to bolster the INA in three ways. First, it would orchestrate a campaign of violence and targeted assassinations. Abdullah claimed the GOI had evidence of Iranian planning in this regard, including lists of political figures marked for assassination. Second, Iran would exert pressure on political leaders in the provinces, particularly in southern and central Iraq, to foment instability. This would undermine Maliki's claim that security conditions had improved under his leadership and help ensure a strong turnout for the INA coalition. Third, Iran would quietly reach out through allies in Iraq's Council of Representatives (COR) to delay passage of significant legislation, including a new election law. (Comment: Continued delay in finalizing the new election law increases the likelihood that the COR will revert to the 2005 election law, which provides for a closed electoral list (voters choose party/coalition lists rather than individual candidates). Observers generally conclude that a closed list system would benefit the INA at the expense of Maliki's still to be announced coalition. End comment.)

[1](#)3. (C) Abdullah also conveyed two requests. First, that the United States lend political support to Iraq's request that the UN establish an international committee to investigate the August 19 Baghdad bombings (ref B). (Note: At our request, Abdullah gave us a copy of the letter from PM Maliki to UN SYG Ki-Moon, which he said had been delivered September 1 in New York, requesting such an investigation. Copies have been passed by email to NEA-I, the NSC and USUN. End note.) Second, Abdullah urged the United States not to be upset by

election-related posturing and statements. He implied, but did not say directly, that PM Maliki would distance himself from the United States as part of his election campaign.

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